1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

753 is that it is caused by magic and best cured by detection of the magician, or by white counter-magic.

761 Black magic is still suspected as the cause of death by all Marias. Bison-horn Marias consider it proved if, when they return 754 next day to the pyre where they left a corpse burning, they find part of the body unburnt. Hill Marias, through a *waddai* clan-priest [787] or his medium assistant, call on the corpse to impel its bearers to one of seven leaves that represent the possible causes of death; three of these leaves represent the magic of a fellow-villager, the magic of a *waddai* or medium, and the magic of a man at enmity with the deceased owing to a quarrel. All log-gods, whether Maria clan-gods or the various Anga-deo and Pat-deo of the Halbas and Murias, have the power of detecting witchcraft, either by impelling their bearers to the offender (the usual way among non-Marias) or through their oracles the *waddai* (or *wadde* or *wadde*). In previous chapters we have seen witchcraft regarded as the cause of the blacksmith's iron ore[1] failing to produce good iron when smelted, and of the spoiling of the flowering peduncles of the *salphi* tree[2] by worms and grubs. In fact, again to quote Glasfurd[3]:—

> 'The people invariably impute their misfortunes to witchcraft. If a man's bullock dies, it is caused by witchcraft; if his crops fail, it is because the land has been bewitched by someone who is at enmity with the owner; a lingering sickness or painful disease is laid at the door of an enemy, and, in short, from the most common affairs of everyday life to the most serious, every evil that befalls a family is imputed to witchcraft.'

674 Suspected witchcraft was the cause of eight out of the eighteen 754 murders committed between 1917 and 1923 by Bison-horn Marias 683 and of the two murders committed by Hill Marias; it was the alleged cause in the one Hill Maria and six of the eleven Bison-horn Maria murder cases which I tried between 1927 and 1931 as *ex-officio* Sessions Judge. Glasfurd[3] went on to give details of the cruel treatment meted out in his day to persons suspected of witchcraft; the final test applied to a suspect, even if the preliminary test had been in his favour, was to sew him up in a sack, and duck him in waist-deep water, adjudging him guilty if in his struggles for life he managed to raise himself above the water; he was then beaten by the crowd, his head shaved, and his front teeth knocked out with a stone, to prevent him muttering his incantations. He was pelted with all kinds of filth, made to eat degrading food, and driven out of the country. But, with one exception, in none of the many murder and assault cases arising out of suspected witchcraft which occurred while I was in Bastar and of the previous cases of which I have notes was any action taken by Maria village communities

[1] See p. 176. [2] See p. 188. [3] Report, pp. 32-4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

787 825 584

be postponed for a week or two, not that the proposed match should be dropped.

D. Beliefs about Natural Phenomena

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To the Hill Maria the universe is *Bhum*, the sky being *Pogho-bhum*, and the earth *Adi-bhum*; they have no name for any underworld or home of the Departed. They sometimes say that they have heard of a god named Ispural living in *Pogho-bhum*, but that they do not worship him. To Hill and Bison-horn Maria the sun (*porad*) is a Koitor, the moon (*lenj*) his woman, and the stars (*hukom* or *minkos*, Hill Maria; *uk'ka*, Bison-horn Maria) are their children; falling stars (*Sohra*, Hill Maria) are their excrement; the Bison-horn Marias consider that falling stars are a portent of death. Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias call the Milky Way the Road (*daghar*, Hill Maria; *marg*, Bison-horn), but they do not know who or what uses the road and have no legend about it, though the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur say that it is the road over which Bhimul drives his bullock-cart, the thunder being the rumbling of the wheels. The only constellations for which I could get Hill Maria names were *Nagar* or Plough for Orion and *Khatoli* or Cot for the Great Bear; enquiries on this point among the Bison-horn Marias drew blank. Neither had any theory about the markings on the moon's face; the Hill Marias have observed that they sometimes look like a human face. The Hill Marias call the rainbow the Earth-serpent (*Bhum-taras*, or *Bhum-taras-korta*), and say that it crawls out of a great ant-hill and throws its light across the sky as a sign of no more rain: the Bison-horn Marias call it *Bhimul-vil*, the bow of Bhimul the rain-god. The Hill Marias associate clouds (*mayyal*) with rain (*pegh*), but do not know where the rain comes from. Thunder (*gadar*) and lightning (*orr*) just happen, and do not alarm them, nor do they appear to have any special precautions to take in burying a man killed by lightning, unlike the Bison-horn Maria. But hail (*adur*) terrifies them, and all rush into their houses. They have no explanation of eclipses, which they call *garhar*, an obvious corruption of the Hindi *grahan*; but the idiomatic way of saying 'there is an eclipse' is '*garhar lopinta*', literally 'the eclipse is swallowing'; and both they and Bison-horn Marias call a man with a hare-lip '*garhar-kandya*', an expression which they themselves cannot explain and is borrowed direct from their Hindu neighbours, who always attribute a hare-lip to an eclipse during the mother's pregnancy.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 Both for burial and for cremation most Hill Marias place the body in the grave or on the pyre with the head, face upwards, towards the sunrise and the feet towards the sunset; the Usendi clan, however, reverses this.

761 When the death is obviously a natural death after a long life, and there can be no suspicion of magic, nothing is done at the funeral to ascertain the cause of death. But if, for example, a 764 man or woman dies suddenly in the prime of life for no apparent reason, the bearers halt on the path just by the funeral ground, and stand with the bier resting on their shoulders. The *waddai* takes seven *saja* leaves, and places them in a row on the ground a few paces away from the bier. One leaf represents the Earth or Bhum, and stands for death through the displeasure of the Village Mother; the second stands for death through sickness; the third for death through the displeasure of the clan-god and the Departed (*pen-hanal*); the fourth for death through the magic of a fellow-villager; the fifth for death from the magic of a man whose enmity has been aroused against the deceased by a quarrel or exchange of abuses; the sixth for death from the magic of a *waddai* or magician; and the seventh for death from natural causes. The *waddai* or, if he is not present, the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita*, strikes the earth three times with an axe, and calls on the corpse to disclose the cause of its death. The corpse is then believed to impel the bearers to carry it to one of the leaves and stand on it; or else the *waddai* first excites the corpse by scattering husked grain over it till it moves the bearers to one of the leaves. The bearers then leap eight or nine paces away from the leaf, and stand with their backs to the row of leaves. They must not look behind them while the *waddai* changes the order of the leaves, after which the corpse has again to impel its bearers to stand on one of the leaves. Three or four times in all the process is repeated, the leaves being rearranged each time behind the backs of the bearers; and if each time the corpse indicates the same leaf, despite its changes of position, the company is satisfied that it has truly revealed the cause of its death. If in successive tests it indicates different leaves, they assume that there was nothing wrong with the death. In old days the elders stated that if the corpse indicated magic as the cause, the *waddai* at once called on it to point out the magician among those present at the funeral, or in the dead man's village or an adjacent village; but nowadays they do not proceed to an immediate witch-hunt; a seed of suspicion has, however, been sown which will sooner or later grow into assault or murder.

764 Then, if the body is to be buried, the bearers bring it to the grave, which is dug only waist-deep, lift it off the bier and place it in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

763 for some time with a series of one long followed by two short beats to announce that a death has occurred in the house; he then climbs down, and continues this drumming on the ground until the relatives and friends of the dead man assemble, or until the body is taken out to be cremated. Sometimes they fire guns at intervals for the same purpose. Messengers are sent out to neighbouring villages to bid relatives to the funeral.

764 When all the men and women have assembled the body is taken out of the house and washed with a pot of water and anointed with a mixture of ground turmeric and oil. They then spread a cloth on a bier of bamboo wicker-work, lay the body on it, and spread a cloth over it. Each male relative who can afford it brings a cloth and similarly spreads it over the body. Four men then carry the bier on their shoulders to the cremation ground, followed by all the [533] mourners, and men beating the dactylic funeral drum-beat. The pyre is made there, the body laid on it with head to the east and feet to the west, and covered over with fuel. Two men, generally two sons, or two sons-in-law, or a son and a son-in-law, then kindle the pyre at the head and the feet of the body respectively. As soon as the pyre is blazing fiercely the company leaves the cremation ground and returns to the dead man's house for food. The cremation ground is almost always on the side of the path or road opposite to the row of menhirs erected to commemorate the dead, which is known to the Bison-horn Marias as *uraskal*.

[787 On the next day all go to the cremation ground to see whether the body has been completely reduced to ashes; if any portion 761] remains unburnt, it is a sign that the death was due to the magic of some enemy. All condole with the members of the bereaved family and return to their houses.

On the next Saturday morning comes the erection of the *uraskal* menhir. There are *uraskal* with great numbers of menhirs almost everywhere in the Bison-horn country, and in most parts villagers continue to erect them for men, women and children whenever a death occurs. On the Jagdalpur side, however, and [718] around Paknar, though every village has its *uraskal*, new menhirs are seldom set up in these days, the reason given being always that the ceremony is too expensive. It is indeed expensive, for if properly done it involves the killing of at least one, and possibly two cows, a pig or two, and the provision of three or four *khandi* of grain—*kuthi*, *urad*, *mung* and rice—and an adequate supply of *mahua* spirit and *landa*. But expense is not taken into account at 764 weddings, where open house is kept for a thousand guests if need be. 177 The real reason is that these Bison-horn Marias are in close contact 554 with Hinduism with its veneration of the cow; and as they raise

[see cat. 116, p. 426, — Analyst]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

887 goes to the market and attends the festivals, though there is not so much for her in these as for the men. But her real hour of happiness is at a marriage. Here she may lay aside restraint and recapture the abandon of youth. Now she may drink heavily and for a few hours in blissful intoxication free herself of inhibitions and forget all that is tiresome and weary in her life. If the older men enliven the marriage scene with their buffoonery, the older women divert it with their obscenity. There is nothing that they may not say, little they may not do. Their songs and their dance movements are outrageous and never fail to rouse laughter in the crowd.

888 In a very few cases Muria women grow riggish in old age. They adorn themselves with many ornaments and wear bright-coloured saris. This behaviour is not approved.

You are an old woman,
Forget your dances.
You are an old woman,
Yet on your buttocks is a tiny cloth
And flowers are in your hair.

Although there is a rule that women should never use their ghotul titles after marriage, when a group of old women who have grown up together in the same ghotul meet in later life, they usually use the old names in order to awaken happy memories of the past. I am told that then they exchange reminiscences through half the night and that such times are among the happiest of their lives.

886 As elsewhere in aboriginal India, the climacteric does not appear to be dreaded or even to be specially noticed. In India, women are old at 45 and they greet the cessation of the menstrual period with relief that they are now saved from its embarrassments. I have not been able to find any myth about the climacteric; there does not seem to be any rule about it or any desire to avert it. It is a purely natural phenomenon. 'The stream that flowed so long is dry', 'the old tree has begun to wither'. Some people believe that the tree withers because 'no one goes to an old woman,[1] so her vagina has no grain to eat; no rain falls in her stream, so how can it flow?'

II. Death and the Ghotul

761 883 The ghotul is a place of separations. But when a chelik or motiari dies there is a special feeling of sorrow, a sense of outrage, the conviction that something exceptional and abnormal has occurred. Sometimes the ghotul is closed for three days; where it is not closed the children gather sadly and there is no singing and there should be no intimacies. When older people die the dormitory is not closed. 'The ghotul is the *Dinda-mahli*, the Palace of the Unmarried. As the Raja's Palace is not shut when people die in the town, neither is ours. But if two or three of the chelik and motiari die, then we shut it.' At Dongrigura, they said that when a chelik died, the motiari wept and next day initiated one of the younger boys and gave him the dead chelik's title, so that there might be no gap in their fellowship. When the Subedar died, they made his little brother Subedar next day and gave him as 'husband' to the Subedarin, his *anga*, or elder brother's 'widow'.

The death of a chelik or motiari is always abnormal. The death of a little child or of a child in the womb is no less unnatural. 'Just as in a field, rice

[1] A rather cynical proverb runs: 'How disgusted is a man who eats stale food in the morning and goes to bed with an old woman at night.'

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

761 ●

sometimes grows properly and sometimes fails, so a child may die or rust or 883
wither for lack of rain and so die in the womb.'

The Muria do not hide the facts of death from their children or restrain 764
them from witnessing the gloomy rites by which they dispose of their dead. 883
Indeed, as at marriages, chelik and motiari have their special duties at a
funeral. The chelik generally carry the corpse out to the place of disposal;
the motiari accompany them there and afterwards make leaf-plates and cups
for the funeral feast. If a pregnant woman or a mother with a very young
baby dies, only the chelik may take the body out beyond a stream and dispose
of it.

All over India it is believed that those who die unmarried turn into unsatis- 761
fied and petulant demons. They have been frustrated in obtaining the love- 775
liest things in life and for all time they are miserable. It is curious that it is
not usually virginity but the fact that the dead boy or girl has not passed
through the marriage ceremony that matters. A married boy who has not
consummated the marriage is said to live in some saja tree on his property
to protect it. Women may go near, but not menstruous or pregnant women
or their husbands. The Muria take special precautions when a chelik or 765
motiari dies. The Gaita drives nails into the four corners of the grave and 776
the ghotul members make a special offering to the ghost begging it not to
trouble them. In some villages it is believed that the ghost of a motiari lives
under a mahua tree and the cooking for the funeral feast therefore is done
in its shade. In Padbera, the Muria believe that when a motiari dies she
becomes a Mirchuk and lives in a pipal tree, and a chelik becomes a Matia
and lives in a banyan. The usual Gondi word for the ghost of a motiari
is Nelang-jural; occasionally she occupies an old ant-hill. Very young
children live in a banyan and drink its milky sap. In Bakulwahi twelve years
ago a motiari died and the Gaita drove nails into the four corners of the ghotul
building and went round it with the chelik in procession in order to protect it
against ghostly invasion. They sacrificed a pig saying, 'Are you going to stay
here, or will you go away?' When the pig ate the rice which was as usual
offered to it the Muria understood that the motiari was ready to go away.
They carried the pig to the boundary of the village and killed it there and thus
freed the ghotul from any danger from the ghost of that girl. In Palari the
Muria said that when a chelik was killed by a tiger he turned into a Baghmeri-
bhut. When he died of ordinary illness he became a Kuara-bhut, revealing
his presence in a whirlwind. When a very young chelik died he became an
Arajatta-bhut and entered into people's stomachs, giving them a lot of pain.
In Palnar the ghost of the chelik or motiari attacks whichever member of the [755]
ghotul is the first to get married after the death, presumably out of jealousy.
When the Siraha diagnoses what is the matter he offers the usual sacrifices
and, making a little man out of straw, asks the bhut to leave its victim and
possess the straw-man instead. This is then carried to the boundary of the
village and thrown away. Where a chelik or motiari has died in a village
during the previous year, on the eve of any wedding the Gaita goes to a small [585]
date palm and ties it round and round with string saying, 'Go away from
here, don't come near the boundary of our village'. He puts a large stone
on the tree and the wedding can take place in safety. After the wedding he
removes the stone, unties the string and offers an egg and chicken.

In Kabonga it was said that when a chelik or motiari died, the ghost became 775
what they called an Uriya-bhut. But they said that there was nothing very
dangerous about it. 'The Uriya-bhut plays and dances just like the chelik and
motiari. In fun it throws leaves and dust into the air; it blows in people's

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Angār mute rāni ra.	Angar Mute is the Rani.
Yar muyelē kilandu ra.	Weeping, she is bathing in the water.
Jhāro jhāro kilandu ra.	As she weeps the tears fall.
Pāhmaro dhoti ra!	O her silken cloth!
Dhoti tene harundu ra.	She looks at her cloth.
Tāna dudeng ākale ra?	How can we describe her breasts?
Mākha kāying dudo ra.	Her breasts are as the bel fruit.
Ghātum tikale wāndung ra.	From the bathing-place she is coming home.
Lone tike kandung ra	In the house
Mai gathe māta ra	There are so many relatives
Sanju lanju kile ra.	That we cannot count them.

The rest of the song describes Angar Mute's court, to which comes the Pargana Manjhi with small legs, his spear over his shoulder, a big-bellied Kotwar and many other officials. The Manjhi delivers judgement, giving a hundred rupees to the Raja and only a pair of bullocks for the Muria. 'One of the bullocks had no tail, the other had no horns.' Then the chelik and motiari who have escorted the corpse to the burial ground are described. There are sixty boys led by Kosi Leyur and sixty girls led by Gara Karre Mode, the Belosa of the ghotul, whose vagina is sixteen cubits long and whose pubic hairs are five cubits long. 'A jungle boar could roll in her vagina.' The boys break her bangles and push the pieces into her navel with a *jharar jharar* noise.

All this, which seems merely coarse to us, is exceedingly amusing to the Muria; the song is really a comic effort intended to relieve the tension of the funeral now that the main rites are done.

VI. Divining the Cause of Death

It is always important at a funeral to discover the cause of so monstrous and unnatural a thing as death. At Binjhli, when magic is suspected, they halt the bier before it reaches the burial ground and the Siraha medium recites a string of names of suspected persons. When the name of the guilty man is mentioned, the bier moves forward violently of its own accord. This method, which resembles the use of an Anga clan-god for divination, is common throughout the State, and Grigson has recorded a similar, though more elaborate, rite in use among the Hill Maria.[1]

At Kehalakot, the Muria remove some locks of the dead man's hair and a little earth from beneath his head. They make a small flag-pole with the hair and the earth and a saja leaf stuck on an ebony stick. They take this to the jungle and a boy holds it while the Siraha recites the names of any suspected causes or people. When the right word is uttered, the flag is said to quiver. At Kokori the villagers go to the boundary and put five heaps of rice in a row, one for Maharpurab, one for witchcraft, one for Mother Earth, one for the ancestors of the house, and one for any local godling who may have been troublesome. The people sit some distance away, and spend the time having their hair done by their relatives-in-law. Presently a crow flies down and pecks up one or other of the piles of rice, thus revealing the cause of death.

The *thumbdari* divination is done with chickens on the second or third day after death. One chicken is taken from the house of the dead and one from

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

761 the house of a samdhi. The chickens are exchanged so that a representative of the dead person's house holds the samdhi's chicken and vice versa. The 781 usual piles of rice are made and the chickens held before them while a string of names is recited. When the chickens peck at the rice, it is believed that they have revealed the cause of death. The chickens are then sacrificed and cooked with the rice on the spot.

It is commonly believed all over India, as by the Muria, that the way the smoke rises from the funeral pyre indicates the sort of death the deceased has suffered. If the smoke goes straight up, it indicates a natural death; if it goes crooked, it proclaims the hand of witchcraft.

VII. 'Bringing Back the Soul'

769 The curious rite of 'bringing back the soul' is known to the Hill Maria and the Bison-horn Maria, but is most common among the Muria who practise it in many different forms. Since this rite is performed throughout the Central Provinces, and since some of these Muria probably represent an ancient migration from the north into Bastar, it is not surprising that we should find this cultural link between them.[1]

It is rather difficult to describe the rites because of the bewildering variety of detail to be discovered from village to village, but it is possible to get a fairly clear picture of the main outlines.

After death, on the following day or at any time up to three years, when there is sufficient provision in the house, the relations of the dead man are summoned for a feast. Sometimes the relations are warned by a dream that the spirit of the dead is dissatisfied and that they must do something to comfort and honour him.

The people assemble, both *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relatives, and enjoy a feast in the dead man's house. The next morning they go singing, both men and women, attended by chelik and motiari with their drums and cymbals to the nearest tank or river. In some villages a samdhi makes a small booth on the bank; nine reeds are planted in the ground, mango leaves tied to them and a string run round them seven times. On the top he puts a small mat and on the ground he makes a circle with red and black powder and places an egg in the middle in the name of the Yer Kanyang (the Water Maiden). The Gaita then puts three rings of sonra fibre in the circle and an earthen pot filled with water.

[1] Accounts of bringing back the soul have been given for several tribes by Russell and Hiralal, for the Gond (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 94), Ahir (III, p. 28), Halba (III, p. 195), Kharia (III, p. 436), Kond (III, p. 469), Lohar (IV, p. 124), and Taoula (IV, 541). The practice is probably common to all the tribes in the Central Provinces. It is said that the Gond once buried their dead inside the house in order to ensure re-birth within the family; possibly 'bringing back the soul' has a similar purpose. The Gond customs recorded by Russell and Hiralal resemble those of the Muria. Others, however, differ. For example, the Kharia bring back the soul of the dead by attracting it at night to a lamp placed at a cross-roads. They sit near the lamp calling on the dead man and when the flame wavers in the wind, they break the lamp saying that the soul has returned to them. The Kond are said to have brought home the soul riding on a bow-stick covered with cloth. The Lohar have a custom, which I have myself noted for the Pando of east Bilaspur. Rice-flour is spread on the floor of the kitchen and covered with a brass plate. The mourners go to the village boundary, again spread flour on the ground, call on the dead to come and wait till some worm or insect crawls on to the flour. They catch the creature with a pinch of dough and carry it home and let it loose in the house. The flour under the brass plate is scrutinized and it is said that usually the foot-prints of a man or animal are found; this indicates the body of the man or beast to which the soul has passed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

rupee to purchase rings in the bazaar. The Hichami Gaita then dug the hole and they put a saja leaf in the bottom and the stone above it. Soon afterwards a second stone was brought for Birju's mother and this was placed separately, for it is the rule that the memorials for men and women should not usually be together, though this rule, like all rules, is often broken. They bathed the stones and put a *gappa* basket with roots and rice in front of the woman's stone and a dish in front of the man's. Everyone present put a mark of oil and haldi on the stones, just as they might have done at a marriage to the bride and bridegroom. They returned home and sacrificed a bullock and tied the tail to the old man's menhir. On this occasion the souls of the deceased were brought back to the Hanalkot, which stands in the village itself.

The cow or bullock is often chosen by old people while they are still alive. Widows, who may reasonably expect to be neglected, are insistent on dedicating such an animal.

XII. General Ideas about the Menhirs

There is a universal belief that the memorial stones grow in size if the soul of the dead is satisfied with the arrangements that are made for him. I have on several occasions spoken to the Muria of the north (who erect very much smaller stones than the Maria of the south) about the great *wrakkal* of the Bison-horn Maria. They invariably reply, 'But, of course, these stones are very old and they have grown; they could never have put up such big ones'. They believe that even the small stones of the north will grow in time. Kodu, the very intelligent Malguzar of Khutgaon in the extreme north of the State, told me that in the past twenty years he has definitely seen the stones grow in size. A very small stone is put for a baby and it is believed that it will grow gradually until it has reached the size it should have been had it been placed for a man of twenty.

When a stone grows it is considered fortunate. There is sure to be happiness and good luck for the family. If a stone falls down or goes crooked, the relatives consult the Siraha and then put it straight and offer whatever sacrifices he has recommended. It is generally supposed that when a stone falls, it is an indication that the ghost of the dead is angry or feels neglected. In some places, the collapse of a menhir is regarded as prophetic of disaster, and generally should white ants make a nest over the stone it is considered a bad omen. But in some places there is a belief that there is no need to worry about this after twenty years have passed. After twenty years the Hanal has become completely mingled with his ancestors and no longer exists as a separate entity. When an old stone falls down, therefore, the Muria perform no ceremonies and leave it where it is.

XIII. The Hanal Pata

It is very difficult to persuade the Muria to repeat the songs connected with death at any but the proper time. This is quite natural, for there is to all simple minds something dark and ominous about talking of the dead. I did not find a Hill or Bison-horn Maria who was willing to repeat a single song. It has only been among the more open-hearted and friendly Muria that I have been able to get a few songs, mostly in Gondi, which are used during a funeral and at the time of erecting a menhir. I have already given the funeral songs; I will now quote a few songs used at the later ceremonies.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

115 with a particular knack of achieving connexion and intercourse with supernatural beings and, at the great festivals of the State, scores of Ganda and Halba mediums fall into a trance and dance ecstatically before the gods. It will be noticed also that in every case the Churlin dances, that she is 'bound' by charms, cohabits with her captor for many years, bears him seven children and finally disappears on recovering her original garments. It is impossible to say what is at the bottom of this widely distributed tradition.

115 166 In order to avoid the danger of the Ondar Muttai special precautions are taken at the time of her disposal. The Muria, in common with everyone in Bastar, believe that she cannot cross water, so they cremate her body between two streams. The priest makes four iron nails and drives these into each corner of the pyre. Sometimes nails of kassi wood are used. Thorn-bushes are placed above the body. It is considered very important to bury the body immediately. Even if the woman dies at midnight, she must be taken out. They bury the corpse, and only unmarried boys are allowed to handle it. They carry it quickly to the grave, throw the earth upon it and run away. On the day the body is buried, the earth round the grave trembles.

In many villages the Gaita or Waddai goes round the grave throwing mandia grain upon it with the idea that the ghost will be so busy picking up and counting the small grains that she will not have time to do anything else.

The Dorla of Dubatota tie bundles of thorns round the wrists and ankles of the corpse. The Dhurwa of Netanar said that the Gaita drives iron nails through the hands and feet. The Muria of Phunder described how once when a pregnant woman died, the chelik tied her body to the bier with a very strong rope and after lowering it into the grave the Gaita drove four nails into the ground at its four corners. This protection, however, was not successful and so a herd of she-buffaloes was taken to the grave and made to trample upon it. This is another example of the belief that there is some special protection against the Ondar Muttai in the buffalo. The Hill Maria round Chota Dongar said that when a pregnant woman died only women could dispose of the corpse. Women dig the grave on the far side of the village boundary and on the four corners put bits of iron slag and young shoots of the cotton tree. If they put a memorial stone for her, which, in any case, will be a small one, they put a cotton tree pole there also. The Muria sometimes lay an ebony bough over the grave.

115 The Ondar Muttai or Churlin, however, returns to her own country after a certain time. For example, the Muria say that in Jeth (July) at the time of violent wind and rain, the Ondar Muttai goes to her own land, the Rakasgarh, and mingles with her own people. The Hill Maria said the same thing, that after three years she goes to her own country, and I have found a similar tradition among the Bison-horn Maria. What happens to her there is not revealed.

XVIII. Summary

[161] Perhaps the most striking thing in the Muria attitude to death is their emphasis on the continuity of all existence, their belief that death is but an incident in a vital process which continues after the soul has shed its temporary physical integument. But the Muria have not been able to take the further step forward from this into a serene faith and hope in the happiness of the dead, and their desire to help and serve the living. The dead appear rather as dissatisfied, mischievous and wayward, deeply interested in human life but anxious to interfere, to display their power, almost to show off, rather than to assist mankind.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

It is possible that in this case some important evidence was suppressed by the witnesses, for there was a suggestion that the murdered woman had committed incest with her brother. The fear of excommunication and fines would be sufficiently strong to induce everyone to keep quiet about this. On the other hand, it is equally possible that the suspicion of his wife's infidelity was a delusion of Chamru's disordered mind.

Other Maria have been content to take their own way out of the world, when the psychotic disturbance became too strong for them. Many different symptoms are recorded as preceding such suicides. Baiha Ganga, for some days before his death, refused to eat and when people approached him attacked them with his stick. Bongi Maria was subject to periodic attacks of insanity; he tried to kill himself three times before he finally succeeded. Others displayed a marked narcissistic attitude, wandering aimlessly in the jungle, refusing to talk or work; such were Saradu, a northern Muria, who used to wander naked, Nari Maria, Pakli, a little girl about ten years old, and Marvi Mundi, a woman who had suffered since childhood from attacks during which she refused to eat and wandered about aimlessly, neglecting the dozen children she had borne.

There is finally the strange and sombre case of Markami Hirme, mother of four children and about to bear a fifth. In her pre-pubertal period she had been subject to epileptic fits, but was treated by the local Siraha, and was believed cured. On 22 October 1935, at her home at Gonderas, the epilepsy recurred, and she became 'strange in her behaviour'. She was in the eighth month of pregnancy. Two days later, when her husband was out watching the crops, and her eldest daughter had gone for water, she hanged herself from a rafter of the house in the presence of her three little children.

Now such a death is the most dangerous in the world. The woman who dies in pregnancy or childbirth is known throughout India as the Churelin or Churin; in Bastar she is often called the Ondar Muttai, the Old Bee Woman, who attacks men with the fury of a swarm of bees. Hirme's husband and the village elders seem to have been unable to decide what to do. Not one of them dared to touch the

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AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Death comes into the world by the treachery of the gods. 000
The Baiga describe how Bhagavan grew tired of men, but did not know how to kill them. So he gave Nanga Baiga itch and the old man began to scratch. But he was unable to reach the small of his back, and one day when he picked up a stick to scratch himself there, Bhagavan turned it into a cobra and it bit him and he died.[1] The Juang say that formerly men did not die because they did not sleep, and Bhagavan had to send a woman to sell them curds mixed with sleep-medicine. When they ate the curds, they slept and died. The Bhuiya story describes how so long as Jug Budha and his wife were living, no one died and the world was becoming over-populated. So the Supreme Being sent a centipede to bite them, and thus introduced death into the world.

The Muria too, in the north of Bastar, associate the coming 761
of death with the murder of a son. 773

> In the Middle World no man died, and Mahapurub 539
> wondered how he was to get souls for his kingdom. He had a son. He killed him and prepared to carry him out for burial. But when his wife heard of it, she ran weeping to the place and, taking her son from him, sat with the corpse in her lap. Mahapurub said, 'We must bury the child, don't be foolish'. But she said, 'No, I'll never give him to you'.
> Mahapurub then planted a jamun tree behind her. One day some of the berries fell to the ground before her. She picked them up and as she ate her mouth was reddened with the juice. Mahapurub came again and said, 'Give me the boy. You are a witch, you are eating his flesh'. He brought a mirror and when she saw her reddened mouth, she thought she really was eating her son. She wept bitterly, but gave the body to Mahapurub. He buried it and from that day, death has been in the world.

A similar sacrifice accounts for the origin of the sun and 821
moon. The Muria, in a story which is known in a slightly 773
different version to the Bison-horn Maria, describe how after the great wooden circles for the sun and moon were made, there was the problem of how to put life into them. Mahapurub had a son, and Lingo declared that only by killing him and giving his blood to the sun and moon to

[1] Verrier Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1939), p. 329.